

Interview with Mrs. Olieta Clark  
Conducted by Dr. James L. Dodson  
and Miss Emily Lawton - April 2, 1982

TAPE 1 - SIDE 1 & 2

LAWTON: Where were you born?

CLARK: I was born in Redlands and my name is Olieta B. Bowles. This name is spelled beginning with three consecutive O's, o double o. I was born June 8, 1901, so I am a California native. I married in 1922 to John H. Clark who was born in Akron, Ohio in 1901 in February 15. He was with the Goodyear Rubber Plant and came out here. So then we were married in 1922. So I came from Redlands, we moved, and we had six brothers, to L.A. in 1912 and then we moved to the San Fernando Valley in 1915. We were attending Van Nuys High School, 9th grade and Mrs. Sndyer was our teacher and in 10th grade and I had Donna Hubbard. And she was the principal later, Professor Smith was the principal at the time I graduated. Each morning we met in the auditorium in rows with our classroom teacher. Ruby Rogers playing the pipe organ, a gift to our school from the new pipe organ factory, located on the railroad track in Van Nuys Blvd. All the students standing when Professor Smith entered. The pledge of allegiance followed, Onward Christian Soldiers. A message, a prayer from Prof.

Smith and then current events. We had our school song, we left the auditorium with our teacher to go to our classroom. Donna, my classroom teacher also taught me Spanish, a beautiful person. The valley was ? and lots of water. Kester a river. Along Van Nuys Blvd. transportation was only red cars. They left on miles later called Canoga Park. Down Sherman Way to Van Nuys Blvd., down Van Nuys Blvd. to Chandler to Lankershim, which now is North Hollywood. Students came to school on horseback, wagon, buggies, walked five miles or more. The high school was one of our high schools that was on Owensmouth, one in Van Nuys, one in San Fernando and one in Lankershim. We had very few cars. Pat Owens on an apricot orchard on Sepulveda on the west side, Victory to Magnolia. When the water was deep he would take a flat bottom boat, row in down Sepulveda to Magnolia, across, up Van Nuys Blvd. picking up students. My two brothers and I would wade out and get in the boat. We would row up till we got to the auditorium, then we would put on our shoes and stockings. We never went to school with shoes and stockings on when it was raining. We lived up on the edge of town which was Tyrone and Oxnard, up Van Nuys Blvd. and across Hamlin was our way to go to school. For entertainment we had hey rides and then Friday evening we all went up town and met, just to talk,



nothing exciting. Saturday night we had dances at the Masonic Temple. That was on the corner of Van Nuys Blvd. and Sylvan. Sunday at 9:00 a.m. was Sunday school. I went to the Methodist Church at that time. Reese Mallet was one of our teachers and later I had just attended her 90th birthday. Sunday evening we had Christian endeavor and good fellowship. We had Catholics, Protestants, Presbyterians or Christian Science, it didn't matter what you belonged to we all met for just a good time. Along Ventura Blvd. we had many dairies. Holstein, Ador, and grain fields and alfalfa. Later dairies along Riverside Drive and the Patchey Dairy, Jay's is on the hill at Fulton. And Jessup's Dairy at Roscoe and Sepulveda are jersey cows along Riverside and to Chase's. Rosey Vanoni and I were great friends and so we would take a horse and buggy and up the hill we would go, up to Chase's. Later now this is before...where the Von's market is...we would go up there to get our milk. Mr. James and Mr. Bacon had a large grain field on Ventura Blvd. The thrashing machines would come to bale all hay and men would live in tents or shacks and knowing we all had outside plumbing. We had wells for water, no electricity. Kerosene to run the engines and his was run with a horse. So the cook had to prepare all of the meals. My experience...well the cook's little

girl, three years old, tried to light a kerosene lamp. She spilled it and it on caught fire and everything burning...they got the fire out but she was badly burnt. Her face, all her hair burned off and she was taken to the only hospital we had and that was in Hollywood. Mr. James was a friend of our family and he came to see my mother. The hey had to be baled, no cook. Asked if my mother would she go and she said, "I can't, I have seven children to take care of." So he looked at me, I was 14 years old and mom says, "Yes, she can go and help. Your bins are such a tragedy." So I had to get up at 4:00 a.m., 15 to 20 men to bake biscuits, fried potatoes, ham, bacon or sausage. Build a fire in an old cook stove. We had to have the eggs, boiled coffee. Eat, one of them men could eat more than all six of my brothers. Lunch, a hot meal, meat, potatoes, vegetable, bread and dessert. Dinner, a heavy meal. Repeat lunch. Bake all the desserts and the bread. I had to learn to crank the old car to go to the grocery to do the shopping. Sacks of potatoes, sacks of flour, lugs of vegetables, apples for pies. Corn meal for corn meal bread. I think that's enough of that. So we talk about our flood control. Was the greatest change in the valley. The Los Angeles River was not paved, many people drowned. Deep holes. Fuller trees and old cattails were along each bank. Sometimes two or



three children would drown a week. Mr. Paul Whitsett owned a large orange grove on Van Nuys Blvd., south of Vanowen. The rains would flood the grove so he had a deep ditch dug at Valerio, taking water over to Tyrone. Mr. Rogers had a large apricot orchard at Van Nuys Blvd. and Vanowen, the northeast corner. He didn't have enough money to fight Mr. Whitsett so had to take the flooding. 1924 Mr. Rogers wanted to sell us an acre along Van Nuys Blvd. for \$.10 a linear foot. We were afraid to buy it. How could we have a home in all that water? His daughter Ruby, who was my high school pal, we had been close friends until her death in 1975. The floods of 1937, many bodies in the river, along Victory Blvd. near Laurel Canyon. Furniture of all kinds going down the stream. School bus stalled on Riverside Drive near Hazeltine and we had to pull the boys through the roof to keep them from drowning. These boys was known as the McKinley Home. In 1937 the flood, we lived on Lemay near Kester. My husband worked in post office in Westwood, California. Rain, all roads closed, except Chandler. John drove his car up on the street car trestle. No cars running so as the tracks were washed out in North Hollywood. To Hollywood he had to drive to get to the post office down Sunset Blvd. to Westwood. There were weeks before the roads were open again so this was what he had to contend with

each day. Back the same way. One time Pop sat all night on the counter of the Citizen's National Bank with a shotgun on his lap, barefooted, couldn't close the safe. The water was coming through the front door and out the back. He would go in the back, we would go in the back of the grocery stores and climb a ladder over the sand bags to buy our food. Then came the Depression. In 1936 we bought a home on Tyrone for \$4,000. Seven rooms, Spanish tile roof and our lot went from Victory to Gilmore. That made two or three lots, 50x150. So when the Depression came in 1929 and '33, we were a lucky family. John working in the post office, salary \$100 a month. Mother and dad and three sons. Our house payment of \$36 a month. We bought our home for \$500 down. The car payment was \$20 a month. Our furniture was \$10 month. To buy gasoline, shoes, groceries, taxes, water and light and food. Not much. I took in sewing for a dollar for a dress, glad to get that. Harold Johanson, a realtor, wanted to give us a lot on Lassen near Van Nuys Blvd., we couldn't even pay the taxes. Water to drink has always been important. Why couldn't it be saved? Hot summer and no water. We had a homestead in May Canyon, 380 acres, across Highway 99, came up San Fernando Road to Newhall, up through Saugus, up Glen Canyon. My dad had a bed on the road, stopping and asking each person that



passed, to sign a paper to have Mint Canyon paved. We needed 50 signatures and it took two/three weeks to get the signatures. 99 use to come up through Mint Canyon, back up to the hills to Acton, towards Lancaster and back over the ridge to Bakersfield. His next project was water for Los Angeles and the valley. Getting the big pipeline through Saugus, down the valley to use to come down over the rocks to filter, had to be closed as we were afraid of the water being poisoned. That's why we got the pipes. In the war in 1918 was the First World War, my oldest brother, Tom Lloyd Bowles was the first boy to enlist. He was working for the Edison Company. A large square flag with a star in the middle hung at the middle of Van Nuys Blvd. on Sylvan. Why we'd look up and that was my brother. The second war in 1942, my oldest son Bob A. Clark, enlisted in the Marine Corp. in 1943 my second son, Jack B. Clark enlisted in the navy. In 1945 my third son, Ted Clark enlisted in the navy. All the boys graduated from Van Nuys High. Donna Hubbard, principal. Ted graduated in a navy uniform. I spent many hours at our Van Nuys USO bringing boys home to spend the night. Working in the Red Cross, knitting, crocheting, whatever, making bandages, whatever was needed was what we must do. We made lap robes, just scarfs, hats. Baked cakes and cookies at nights,

many, many home sick boys. My dream, Bob a third Marine had sent word with a Marine to call me when he reached Pendelton. He had malaria. They were in Guadalcanal, that's soon after I dreamed that he was going up on a gangplank onto a ship. The next morning telling my husband in my dream he said, "You are losing your mind." I put the date on the calendar. We went we not receiving any mail, hadn't heard for over four months. Two months later at 4:30 a.m. Bob stood at my back door. He had been sent home with elephantitis, ? stilaritus, a jungle infection in the testicles. The boys were on the train when it slowed down at Sepulveda Bob jumped off, walked home very quickly. They were on their way to Pendelton and he said, "Mother, you will have to take me at once to Pendelton. We have to beat the train." We got there just as the train arrived. So he could go in with the boys and no one knew he had been off of the train. The happiest day of my life was when my three sons were back home from the service. The three are married. Bob lives in Hemet, with one son and two great granddaughters. Our Jack is married and has five children, two grandchildren. Ted, three sons, one grandchild. Ted lives in Porter Ranch. Jack was elected by the people and he is the judge at Valencia Courthouse. He lives in Canyon Country and will soon retire. Some of the old



timers, as Mrs. Hollingsworth. She had a big chicken ranch at the corner of Sepulveda and Sherman Way. The Bollingers had our first grocery store. Wallach's, the first attorney. Later Jack bought his law office. The hides was Maude and that was the only knit shop we had. The Whitsett's...I went to school with Whitsett's daughter. And then our first electric store was by Scotts. And James Bacon and Rogers and Leyans and Harris' and Leonard's Real Estate office and Mary Jane and George Keffer. We went to school together and her dad started the Green Sheet. Later Mary Jane married Sam Pettit. Our first doctor was Dr. Charles Canby, he saved my life. Had the flu in 1918. He told me I couldn't die, they had no more coffins. The grave diggers all had the flu. The mortuary was in the furniture store so all the coffins had to be out in the backyard, as we didn't have any place for them to be. Back then and our first doctor was Dr. Leland Wellburn and his brother was doctor and his sister, all three were the doctors in 1930. Then we later had Dr. Gouchy. Andy Devine lived just around the corner from me. My youngest brother was in the pictures. When he was six months old he was with Mabel Norman at Warner Bros. later and then on to New York and the stage and now he's a doctor in New York. We know lots of the stars. Dr. Post Dutch, as we all knew him, was our

fist tenants. In 1916 the students of Van Nuys High were asked to help plant trees along Sherman Way. Van Nuys Circle to Owensmouth. We planted Theodore Pines, magnolia and rose bushes. In front was the rose bushes. We felt it was our civic duty. We piled on the flat bottom wagon with horses and worked until it was completed. Some of the trees are still growing. We had two canneries opened in Van Nuys. Ours was the Vanamar and North Hollywood's was in Lankershim and that was called the Home of the Peach. And boys and girls and men and women, this was the 1918 War, all went to work in the canneries. Located on Van Nuys Blvd. near Calvert and Oxnard was ours. Tents were up in the back and people came from nearby towns to save the fruit, the tomatoes. Our high school friends and we all worked long hours. 7:00 a.m. until the fruit was in cans. No refrigeration so we had to can them or they would spoil by morning. If it was too ripe and spoiling it would be sent to the dry sheds. That was in back of the cannery. Small children, all ages, would help their parents with their work. The memory of the flies and the worms. I have never eaten a piece of dried fruit since. Our second cannery was on our high school grounds in the shop rooms. The second war, again save our fruit. Donna Hubbard knew I had worked in the cannery, also my three sons had left for war.



And Ted would soon be leaving. While they were installing the equipment someone had to manage and run that cannery. She came to see me and I went to school to learn how to run the cannery. We had to have a state license. Under Milton P. Duffy from San Francisco. He sent a Mr. Vanhoot to teach us and then we had to go to college up near Claremont. From 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. we lived. But this was war so we didn't mind. We lived on the grounds and after many examinations I received a state license how to run the cannery. I was the manager. We had two shifts 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. People canned their own fruit in tin cans and if they had surplus, they brought and sold it to others. Apricots, peaches, plums, nectarines, tomatoes, berries of all kinds. Chickens and rabbits and string beans. Our name was 36 Cal, the Green Sheet gave us the front page publicity. A good write up each day of what we were going to can. When canning closed Carl Reed was our night principal. He asked me what I could do? And I said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "I don't want to lose you as a teacher." He says, "You like flowers. How about teaching flower arrangements at adult education." So again, I was back teaching. I had classes in Burbank, Studio City, Sherman Oaks, Reseda, Canoga Park, YWCA and many programs for garden clubs.

Flowering, flower arranging and horticulture. Studied since 1942 in flower arrangements so I knew what I was doing. I studied for three months in Japan in 1958. I remember of seven garden clubs I belonged to. The first garden club in the valley, the San Fernando Valley Horticulture. We meet on Sundays so the men can attend. In Sherman Oaks, I have a life membership. The garden club was organized out of the flower arranging class and I am a past president. West Valley Garden Club was organized out of my Reseda flower arranging class. I give a talk each month of what to plant, the horticulture and the define plants and flowers for all the members of the clubs that I belong to. The Burbank Garden Club was organized from the flower arranging class at John Burroughs High School in Burbank. I'm a member of the Laurel Garden Club since 1939. I give programs on flower arranging and horticulture at the present time. The first employment for many people was the General Motors. In 1946 the plant opened. The ground had been a dairy. Al Morris from Germain and his sister Alma Whistler and their son had acres of roses. They were moved to Bakersfield, then the General Motors opened. The Parker Bag built in Panorama City, my son Bob Clark made the manager. That was the tallest building. Everyone is afraid of an earthquake that



would happen and it would flatten the building. But it has never done it yet. I've been through many and still standing. Many of our earthquakes that had happened here in the valley. In 1952 we had the Carnation Milk Plant built. A beautiful building. They have taken many awards and Ted Clark has been with them nearly thirty years, who is my son. Penny and Sears on Victory Blvd., later the May Company on Laurel Canyon Blvd. Bullock's Fashion Square we were very proud of it. We didn't have to go to Hollywood or to Westwood to shop to have something of our own. The future farmers built the quadrangle at the Van Nuys High School. Jack Clark, my son, was the president. Later Ted was president. In those days, what can we do for our schools? So they built the quadrangle in memory of future farmers. When the boys left for war we had two acres at Kester and Lemay. They left us with two milking cows, 100 working rabbits, 50 cages of chickens, 25 turkeys plus babies. And 10 pigs, 3 sows and an orchard of apricots and walnuts, plus a victory garden. I didn't have much to do. I had to be at school at 7:00 in the morning. 1936 I joined the Van Nuys Presbyterian Church, transferred from Florence Avenue in Los Angeles. Father Watsonman was a Scotch Minister. Later, Reverend Tom ?Nollifizer. Tom told all of us that lived in Sherman Oaks, he says,

"There's ten of you." Now he says, "You must go out and pioneer and start a new church." So everybody that lived in Sherman Oaks was to move. So we met first in the picture show in that large building with ten people. We had sold our small ranch, sold many memories of the boys was here. In that Fox Theater we met at the Ventura School later so as we grew we bought the lot on Ventura Blvd. and Nobel for our church. The Sherman Oaks Presbyterian Church. We built our first building and added a meeting hall, a kitchen later and then now we have a large church on the corner of Nobel and Ventura which we are all very proud of. In 1936 I joined the Van Nuys Presbyterian Church. So after we had started this new church I want to tell you a little bit about Allen. I am so proud of him. He was our minister and our older minister had to retire and Allen was just a young boy, just like one of my own. Well, he had just finished seminar and he would go from door to door asking people that didn't have a church home to come and join us. This is how we had our church grow to what it is today. He couldn't afford a car so he just walked. His mother was a widow and he had a sister. He often only had an apple for lunch or if he could find a church member to just drop in well he would have a sandwich with us. He walked from North Hollywood, all through Studio City, all through



Sherman Oaks to Encino. And our Sunday School sure did grow. We had so many young children that we had to build a two-story building to hold all of our children. Allen left us and moved to San Diego. We were all broken-hearted over it but he had married and it wasn't very successful so he didn't want to face the people. So he went down and he is now selling insurance in San Diego. You know this lot that you are on in your college was champus berry and Hilda was my closest girlfriend. She was Hilda Patchy. So I was with her when she passed away. And it really broke my heart. It was either '37 or early '38. The dairy was sold to make way for the Los Angeles Valley College. And when it came in, of course they give it to us. And then Ruby was the first organist and she tried out and it was the one that they thought they could teach that was the best that was bought. You know they tried out for it. I lived too far away and Ruby of course just lived up the street. Her husband remarried, she married a boy Bill Barnes from North Hollywood and they met in the cannery so that way I brought in the different canneries. I didn't know whether you had anything on the canneries.

DODSON: No, we haven't. So that's fine to put that in.

CLARK: And how the war cannery started. And then when they wanted to build Pierce College, why I was one of the five teachers that was sent to Van Nuys and we met in a quonset hut wondering if this ground would ever, and some argued for it and some argued against it and they said we could never support a college there. Well, Ed Anger and I went to school together and Ed is still out there at the college. And there was a Mr. Cheese won and Ed Anger and Al Cleveland had the pigs. Ward had the citrus fruit. A butcher had the chickens and I had agriculture.

DODSON: Now what exactly did you teach under the heading of agriculture?

CLARK: Horticulture. But they always called it "Ag." But I only just taught a short time. I just helped them kind of get organized up at Pierce because I was going into this flower arrangement and teaching I had five day classes and four night classes and I was pretty busy.

DODSON: I can imagine with such a stiff...

CLARK: In my one class in Burbank I had 86 students in this one class.



LAWTON: Was that in Horticulture.

CLARK: In flower arrangement. And that was under adult education and that is where these classes have been organized from. So I was them, Carl Reed who was the principal of John Burroughs over in Burbank. He use to come and take my class. He said, "I've never learned so much in my life because you know the name of every plant. You know how to grow it, how to take care of it and everything. I wish you'd teach full time." While he finally had to give me, I had so many students, we couldn't find a room big enough. And so I had to have the shop. He gave me the wood shop. Which was in the adult education building. I had grown out of a classroom. But he wanted me to teach another class but there was no more of me. I didn't have any other day. I had every class I could do. It just wasn't...there was no more of me to give. And there was no other teacher and to my knowledge I taught the first judges to be judges at Hollywood High School and they put that in on me too. Hollywood High School and I have to get there at 5:00 in the afternoon and I taught that 5:00 to 7:00 and get back to Van Nuys at 7:30 and this was no freeway, this was the old road. So I was kept pretty busy. But I've had a busy, busy life. But I am going down to see Carl. Carl was down toward San Diego and he

was the night principal but of course Donna and the one remarkable thing about Donna was this class that graduated in 1918. We'd meet at Mary Jane Pettit's house and you know Mary Jane, don't you?

DODSON: She's the president of our Museum Association.

CLARK: I know she is. And like I say, if it wasn't such a long drive at 3:00 in the afternoon to get back out here for a person my age is too... But I am you know very interested in Van Nuys. I really have never cared for it much out here. Of course, we use to go out here on wagons and swipe watermelons when I was a kid and green apples. I can remember that a lot. And going to high school. And we always wore high laced shoes you know at that time. And everybody would be sitting on those auditorium steps lacing up all these shoes to go into school. And so I just really didn't know how much of this that you've had.

DODSON: Well, we're delighted at all that you've given us.

CLARK: And you know there may be a lot of other things that you've really planned on having that I didn't touch.

DODSON: Not at all. Things that you hadn't touched on that we have in our little outline we didn't ask you



about. For instance, when you were in high school, what sort of amusements did you have? What did you do, outside of school?

CLARK: Well, of every thing that I can remember was the hey rides that we...about every two weeks we'd get our hey ride. Of course, we had no...there was absolutely no TV or radios or anything. And so it was just hey rides. And like I said, that we had the dance and everybody would go to town on Friday night and just walk the streets and just talk to your friends. And that's what you did for a good time. And it didn't matter what project would come up, it was just like...when the cannery, all of us, it was our duty. It was war and we would go and can it seemed. And this man that you're going to call on, Maggie gave you his name. I'm trying to think of it and I can't think of it. He raises carnations over there towards Laurel Canyon and he was the manager of the cannery and when you come in...we had to save the cans and everything had all the fruit you know. We had no refrigeration and many times...so everything had to be canned that day that came in from our wagon and we just didn't have trucks you know.

DODSON: Was going to the beach popular when you were in school.

CLARK: No, we had no way to get there. Now of course swimming...we walked from Van Nuys and they called it...there was an old street car track... Of course, none of us had five or ten cents so we would walk to San Fernando to the reservoir and that's where we went swimming and we walked home which was a good ten miles and that was up by the old Veteran's Hospital. That's where the swimming pool was. And of course, you either drowned or swam so you learned to swim.

DODSON: I see. I think you mentioned Smith, at the high school.

CLARK: Principal Smith.

DODSON: Did you know him personally? Do you remember him?

CLARK: Oh yes. He was our principal.

DODSON: What sort of a person was he?

CLARK: Well, he was very stern. But he was a good religious man. And Loreina...I think Loreina's still alive. His daughter.

DODSON: Oh, is that right?



CLARK: I'm sure Mary Jane knows where Lorenia is. You know we had the old street car depot and they moved it over on Sylmar and fixed it up into a home and it seemed like Loreina had something to do with that. That was his daughter's name. She was one year ahead of me. She was a little older than I am. And of course I knew Mrs. Mulholland. Mrs. Mulholland was...and of course he did a lot of horseback riding too and then of course I learned to ride the horse and when we lived in Mint Canyon that was the only way we could get our groceries and I rode a horse down from when we was up there on the homestead and I would ride a horse with two gunny sacks on each side of the horse down to get groceries down to Saugus and if the bridge was out we'd have to swim. So I stand up on the horse's back to the swim the river and get through to get our groceries and then you took the two bags and put on top and you got on top of the bags and held on the groceries to get them back up home.

DODSON: I see. You mentioned this name Mulholland, was she a member of the engineer Mulholland's family, Bill Mulholland.

CLARK: No, she's a niece.

DODSON: I see.

CLARK: She's comes back into it but she's a niece. She's gone to live in Chatsworth. But the difference between the Chatsworth Historical which I am a member of is that up here they want just their old timers and I have a really closed group of people. And they don't have the young people that we have down at Valley College and that's why I prefer to give things to Valley College and I have a friend that's over at...she's got some old clothes and she's going to get them out and give them to me because...to give to Valley College.

DODSON: Oh, we'd be delighted to have those.

LAWTON: Oh lovely.

CLARK: Things that she said that she had. And as I said to her, I'm so interested in you young people because having the family that I have and my children and you can see I'm just all pictures. But that's the way I want my home and like I say, as long as I'm still around and still doing flower arrangements and enjoying life the way I do and belong to all these garden clubs and being needed in each garden club. Because today it seems they don't know the names of



plants and material. They go to the nurseries and they have a young fellow selling things and he doesn't know the name of any plants. You have to know them yourself. And see my plants, when I taught flower arrangement, it was an educational thing. And most of our arranging teachers don't know names of anything they use either but I do. And we had to know and that was like over at John Burrough's...he would say, "I get so much out of this because I learn all the names of plant materials," and he says, "And you know you names of every plant and you know the spelling of every plant." Well, then when we had...at Hollywood High School, if they wanted to get their grade they had to pass an examination and I gave them a good stiff examination. They had to know there names of plants and what they were doing. And I didn't go back teaching until after the boys left for work...because my duty was at home taking care of these boys. I had three sons and they needed to be...a mother.

DODSON: You mention plants. Can you tell us anything about what sort of plants were growing wild in the valley before it was all built up?

CLARK: We had the Matilija poppies and the yellow poppies. And we had lots and lots of wild flowers. Just

loaded. Lots of different colored lupins and we had the monkey plant. And of course, at one time Beverly Glen was just beautiful when you went through it. It was all wild flowers all the way through it before they seeing all those houses. And Laurel Canyon was the same way. We had this beautiful flowers all of the beautiful manzanita shrubs and their plantings there. It was just beautiful. That of course, we had to give away for all these homes. It was just like on Stone Canyon. You know Stone Canyon was a river. And I can tell you where all the rivers were. Down Kester, what Whitsett did to us. And we would...the Stone Canyon was up in Sherman Oaks and the river came down the back and he had all those lots because we use to go up and find pretty rocks up there until I knew what a bad river it was and coming down from Mulholland. And so I had a girlfriend that lived at the base of it. And she said, "You know, they're going to put homes in that river?" And I said, "There ought to be some way you could stop that." And she said, "No, they're going to put all homes up in there." And look what happened? Home that flooded, homes have come down, then washed down. I have a friend right now is being sued by the state for her home. She was washed down two years ago up in Encino, came down the hill and the doctor's home next door came down. Everything went into garbage.



There was nothing left. And the city is suing her on account that water and sand coming down. And she has no lot left and yet they want her to pay taxes on it.

DODSON: I see.

CLARK: So there is so much wrong in flood waters. Well, that's an act of God. You can't stop it. It's like...we're very lucky on our earthquakes. You know our last earthquake that's over there that took down the...going up to Bakersfield...look what happened there.

DODSON: The Sylmar Quake? Did you feel that here very much in this area.

CLARK: I was out in Santa Paula at that time. It's when my husband was very ill. And we had him in the Santa Paula Hospital and when we had the earthquake and he...so it was up on the hill and we could feel it up there. And my sons felt it. Ted is in a two-story house and his fireplace left the house. Just fell right down. And he had quite a bit of damage of dishes and glass. Jack felt it bad, in Canyon Country. But he felt the earthquake, but of course you see that's where it's centered out there. Of course, I went through the earthquake...the Long

Beach Earthquake. We lived at 90th and Figueroa when we lost everything there.

DODSON: Was there much damage then from the Long Beach Quake?

CLARK: Yes. Clear up to 90th and Figueroa where I lived and then Manchester, all along there we had lots of damage.

LAWTON: Was your house destroyed?

CLARK: Our house stood but we lost a wall. But we had built that home and you know we had built it real good but it went down. And of course, our valley earthquakes, we've never really had a whole lot of damage. That was the worse one and we call that the Sylmar one that's up that way.

DODSON: It's been my experience, the further north you were, the more you felt it. Now down where the college is we apparently didn't get any damage.

CLARK: And I don't ever remember it was just like when they took down the hill. Chase's hill. See Rosey and I use to go in a little old spring wagon and go up that hill. And you would start to hear it. And the cows down in here, the water would be clear up here to

them. And this was all Chase's. And then we'd come up the back way and come through this and would wind around the hill because the horse couldn't go straight up. And then Chase's lived on the top. And of course, I've known Josephine Chase, ? and Joe both for a long long time. And ever since she was already married and we were going to school and we had a spring wagon, Rosey Vanoni and I. And Rosey owned it but she would come pick me up and we'd go up there to get our mail. And of course you know not having ice or refrigeration, it was quite something to...

DODSON: Was that quite a problem? Did things spoil on you rather frequently?

CLARK: Yes, because you're...if the iceman, now I was trying to think what his name was, and he later bought out the Ford Agency and he died not too long ago. But he run the ice truck. And it was lark to come up to high school when the girls would get out of school in the afternoon and then everybody pile in the ice wagon and then he'd bring us home. And he'd sell me ice and of course if he ran out of ice, there wasn't enough ice for the homes. No way to keep your milk. And then when we lived in Mint Canyon, we had a cave and we kept the milk back in a cave. And sometimes you'd walk out there and there'd be a rattle snack



sitting on the pan drinking the milk. I went to school in Mint Canyon my first year with a shot gun, a 12 gauge shot gun. My father taught me to shot it and we'd have to shoot the snakes on the way to school.

DODSON: Is that right? Well, now here a lot about the good old days but I'm not sure that sounds so good.

CLARK: Well, in this area there's a lot of snakes out there. It's a desert. Oh, that's lot of rattle snakes yet. But we were burned down twice in the that Mint Canyon. Burned to the ground with forest fires that came through.

DODSON: Is that right?

CLARK: All the animals burned.

DODSON: You weren't here when the first water came in from Owens were you?

CLARK: Owens, no, they had...the first that I remember real plain was when my dad was trying to get the water and we got these great big and you can see if you go up Mint Canyon up the side of this way, where that Mobile Park is now, this great big and the water

still comes through it. And when we got those ?  
...now before our well in Mint Canyon supplied the  
water for them to pave Mint Canyon and you see there  
was no ridge, you had to go up and you came up  
through San Fernando and then the road came along  
here and there was of course it was just a narrow  
road up to Mint Canyon. But Mint Canyon hadn't been  
paved. My dad was the first one to pave that Mint  
Canyon.

DODSON: Is that right?

CLARK: He was the first one that...and it was three weeks it  
took to get 50 names to get it paved. And they said,  
"Well, we haven't any water." And my dad said, "I'll  
supply it from my well." And our well paved the  
streets.

DODSON: It had enough flow that it could be used for that.

CLARK: It went through Mint Canyon and then as you came in  
the narrow part of Mint Canyon and then you back to  
Acton and then you went back down and then you  
followed the hills and came back down to go through  
the ridge route. And this is where the first road  
went through.

DODSON: Now, you were living in that area when the San Franciscito Dam collapsed weren't you?

CLARK: No, that flooded later. I'd already been down here to the valley. I moved down to the twenty.

DODSON: That was twenty years ago. I see. None of that water came into the valley, did it?

CLARK: No, no it all went to Santa Paula. Santa Paula. Now we were flooded in Santa Paula. We were up there for my husband's health and he got emphysema. That was rubber dust in the lungs and that was from being in the Goodyear. So we lived up there where we had a cooler climate for awhile and then when that broke why...you see all the water from Mint Canyon...at San Franciscito dam and all, it all comes down, well that river goes right along to Santa Paula. You see there's two ridges of mountains. The one on this side. There by Magic Mountain it comes down and then over on this side and that stream of water. You see that's why they get so badly flooded. And we got flooded there bad. In Santa Paula. The only way I could out and my husband had to of course had to have these treatments at the hospital and I would...the road would come in and I wore boots. And I would bring the car down and they would take oh kinda like



a street sweeper thing and shovel the slime and that so I could the car and I would follow the police department to get him and get him up to the hospital and that's the way I during that flood and that was what the '78 flood that we had that was a bad one.

DODSON: Do you remember the end of World War I? The Armistice? What was that like?

CLARK: Oh my yes. Well, we all went to Hollywood. Everybody went to Hollywood and this boy that I knew real well, which was Shirley Hufacker and that was...they owned the first 40 that would be in Van Nuys and that was my boyfriend and he had a car. Oh I can just remember kids just hanging all over that car and we went to Hollywood and to...Shirley's passed away now. But we just walked the streets and screamed and yelled and all of that. They didn't do that when the boys came home from war. The second war.

DODSON: That's what I was going to ask you. Whether you saw a contrast between the 1st and 2nd in that respect?

CLARK: Well, they just didn't seem to care about these boys that went over. And I don't know if you know what elephantitis or phililitis is or not.

DODSON: Yes, I have an idea what that is, yes.

CLARK: It's terrible and when Bob came home and just like I say this dream in my head...my husband never could believe it but I marked it on the calendar. I marked it down on that date that I had this dream and it just like that God had touched me on the shoulder and said, "Your son is coming home." Because it was just as clear as it could be, that he was coming and that was very day that he entered that gangplank and went up on the boat to come home.

DODSON: Well, that alignment cleared up when he got into a cooler climate.

CLARK: Dr. Ballburn, who was our doctor at that time in Van Nuys and he assured what the...and of course later Bob went to Pendelton and was Paymaster at Pendelton because you see they could put him in the tropics again because if he got malaria it would just flare up again in the testicles. So the medicine that they gave him and at Pendelton, worked on it too, they know how to take care of it. But that was before he got into Guadalcanal and he was, like we said, we got no mail at all. It had been four months and I hadn't heard a word from him and of course you're just about to lose your mind and knowing that war, it was a

different war than some of the other wars where you'd been able to hear from them. And this boy came back and he said, "There in a fox hole in Guadalcanal." He called me on the phone and told me and he says, "I don't know when they're going to get home but he wanted you to know that he's at Guadalcanal now." And they would spend three weeks down in a fox hole. Eating just tree root, no bathroom or nothing. If they come up the Japs would shoot them. So that they...and then Jack was wounded and he was on a submarine and they came up and just topside and shot him in the breast. But I'm lucky for three boys come home.

DODSON: Guadalcanal was one of the worst.

CLARK: Third marine, it's the worst war we ever had. It was a terrible war.

DODSON: Was he in that first marine division then?

CLARK: Third marine. And he left right away. He was in boot camp two weeks and shipped out.

DODSON: Is that right?

CLARK: Just two weeks in the service and he was shipped.



DODSON: Well, they certainly gave him his training fast then.

CLARK: They just...they didn't even stop and train them they just...we saw him the one week then he got out of boot camp and he called me on the phone and he says, "Mother, I'm being shipped out." And we got right in the...it was just like the trip that I made to San Diego to get him there. I don't know how fast I drove. Don't have any idea. We had a Chevrolet, one of the first Chevrolets and of course at that time they weren't like they are today. You had to get out and crank them. And he said, "Mother, I have to get there." He says, "I've got to beat the train, because I'm not allowed to jump off the train and go home." But he was just so anxious to get home so I said, "Well, we'll go." And many a night, many many nights we'd gone down where the boys would be trying to get on the train and there would be no way for them to get back to camp and my husband would say, "Well, I'll take as many as I can." And they would sit two deep, on the running boards, any place and just hang on. And we'd have to get down there and get those boys back. And when I would take the boys down then there'd always be a load waiting to come back. You didn't have to be afraid of the boys then. They didn't do anything like they do today. And those poor boys just had to have get back and they

had no money. And I would go to USO and there'd be a little boy sitting in the corner and just so young. And I feel so sorry for him and I would go over and sit and talk to them. And he'd tell me where he came from and I said, "Would you like to go over to my house." Oh, they just loved it. There was lots of times when we lived on Tyrone that we had two rooms built on the back of our house, that's where I helped give you the snow pictures, and I would go out there and count them. We had a big patio. On a Sunday morning, to see how many biscuits I'd have to bake and I'd have 18-20 boys just laying all over the floor. We had four bunk beds in there but that was enough for them. Then we had hammocks all over the patio and I would count to see how many there was. And sometimes I had 18-20 boys to fix breakfast for. My boys had told them if they got...they'd say, "Well, if you can get to Hollywood, and you just have to go to off Ventura Blvd. And you hitch hike to Ventura Blvd. and get off at Tyrone and just walk down, that's where my mother lives. And she'll take you all in." I would go to the front door 3:00 and 4:00 in the morning and have a boy stand there cold. And I say, "Who sent you." Either Ted, Jack or Bob and told them if they got to California, come see their mother. So I would open the door and they come on in. And I always, if I had thing...we call it the

bunk house...if that was full of boys, I would open up my davenport, wherever, they didn't care if they slept on the floor, or where they slept. Just to be in a home.

DODSON: Was there any sort of military installation here in the valley itself?

CLARK: Well, we had the big USO building and then we had the recruiting station, you know where they would... And that down at the furniture store on that side of the road. And that were staying up to get the boys to go in the service.

DODSON: Do you remember whether any sort of shortages developed as soon as the war began and what those shortages were of different things?

CLARK: Everything was short.

DODSON: Did some things bother you more than others?

CLARK: Well, you see raising my own garden, you see I had the garden. And we had our milk. This was funny one time when we had the hogs and Dutch Post who was our first dentist came up and of course we didn't have freezers you know. You had the Union Packing House



is where you took your food and your meat and so at the Union Packing House they said to Dutch, they said, "I've heard of everything, but I've never heard of anybody having a half of hog." And they would come up to our place there on Lemay Street and we had two acres and they would come back in there and take...and they butcher right there. And they'd it down and Dutch Post and Ed Waddel and all of them and so they would each divide you know the hogs. They would each get a half. There was Ted Milk who lives on Kester and he's still there alive and he's still there and he was one grade ahead of me in school. And his daughter would come to get the milk. Now I had to get up at 4:00 in the morning when the boys left. There was butter to churn, milk to get ready for customers and the cream to separate. You had to separate the cream and I had to be in classroom at 7:00. So it was get up and get busy early in the morning.

DODSON: Yes. Now how about clothes. Did you find there were shortages in that field?

CLARK: Well, Arthur Machum was the manager of Penny's store in Van Nuys. And I gave him milk and cream and butter which you couldn't get, that was the thing she couldn't...you know milk was for babies only. And so

on Sunday morning he would call me, if he got some stock in gin or something into the store he would call me and I would go to the store in the back way and that's where I did my shopping.

DODSON: I see.

CLARK: ? And he was our first manager at Penny's. You know we're all, my age, there just about all gone. There even on ? just like one of the girls in here...she said, "We use to play bridge in the '40s together." And she says, "You know, you and I are the only one left of that group of 12 people." And she says, "And mother and I are ??"

DODSON: You see the Lord needed you down here teaching. He couldn't spare you.

CLARK: I got a busy life. It's just like when my granddaughter come over. She come over Wednesday, it was her day off from work and brought her baby and he's so cute, he's nine months old. And she said, "Tim, I want you to love grandma just like I love grandma." She says, "Grandma's always taken care of me." And you know with Carol, the only way she could get out. Jack was a young attorney then. And so they bring me the child and so one more, one more,

one more, and so I've always had my children. But I've always enjoyed them. And I always to be called grandma and there is none of this melanous stuff or anything like that. I'm a grandma and I'm so proud to be a grandma. I'm really proud of it.

DODSON: Do you recall when there were many Japanese people living in the valley and how there were imprisoned.

CLARK: We had quite a few. But we had the most wonderful boy Yoshia and I was so sorry to him go to camp. It was, of course, I really don't think these American born Japanese people should have been kept...sent to that camp. But and I didn't feel at that time. And Yoshia, he said to me when he was going to go, he said, "What worries me so is about my mother and father. Whether they can stand it or not. And I knew lots of them. Being in this time with fathers and everything and a lot of them that was over there in the Sawtelle area. And he was such a nice boy. He was such a good boy. And he was such an honest boy. We had the 50's Grocery Store worked in Mid-City drug store and then we had this little grocery store up here and I've been trying and trying to rack my brain and I think nobody seems to know their name of that grocery store. But anyway Yoshia worked in that in the vegetable department. And I can remember



him when he'd say "A sack of groceries that big for ten cents." And you would take it home and perhaps maybe the carrots was cracked a little bit or maybe the turnips didn't have a good top on it. But he'd say, "It's only ten cents." And you could get along with it. Because you know, my husband at the post office he didn't make a lot of money and you just lived on that kind of thing. You know that you learn to get by and he it broke my heart. It was just...I just really I felt so sorry for him. Because he never, his mother and father had been raised here. They didn't know anything about Japan. And you know when I studied in Japan I was over there and studied three months flower arranging. And the Japanese still don't think much of it. All they want is our money. It's what there after, it's money.

DODSON: Do you feel that they still bare a grudge over the war, the bombing of the cities and that sort of thing.

CLARK: Yes, I do. I think they here to get everything they can get out of us. Look at San Francisco, they own every hotel downtown. You go up there and rent a room, downtown San Francisco and see how they treat you? When you see some of those kind of things, it kind of makes you wonder.

DODSON: Do you feel that the valley has had much in the way of racial tensions with the various minorities here?

CLARK: I think in the present day they do. But before...now we had the Mexican school was on Kester and it was called the LaMona and when that school was there on Kester the Mexican children went to that school, I think these Mexican children should be taught English in a class. I have a friend, a boy, Jack went to school with her husband and...

TAPE 2 - SIDE 1 & 2

DODSON: I envy anyone who can carry on a conversation in two languages. Except I can't do that myself.

CLARK: I can speak Spanish very good when I was going to school. But we don't use it enough. Because you forget the words but we have Mexican gardeners and here the people in the streets and that and they'll be talking to each other out there in the front. And so every once in awhile I'll chip in with a few words and I heard one of them say the other day. He says, "Well, she can talk Spanish as good as we can." But I knew some of the words they were saying and I knew who they were talking about so I just let them know that I knew what they were saying. But now I have...Ted's older son learned Chinese. And he got his Master's Degree in Arizona of Chinese.

DODSON: Well, that's no mean feat to learn Chinese.

CLARK: Well now you think that something, he's going around the world right now. He works for this company and the company is out in Canyon Country and the Chinese company and he goes all over the world selling their things that they're making. They make your wash bowls that you use in your bathrooms out of plastic



and it looks just exactly like our regular ware that we've had for years and years and years and it's made out of plastic and it's grained and everything. It's just beautiful what they do. But you know you just can't believe what they're doing. Of course, and when these Chinese people get off of the planes and he walks up and speaks to them and gets their hotels for them and goes with them to a restaurant and shows them how to order and they just look and shake their heads like this. But it's quite interesting...I haven't...well my grandchildren now. I am just very lucky living on ? parades like that. They all wanted to go ahead. They want to do things. Dale, Bob's oldest son is manager of the Olympic Bank up in Seattle, Washington and Jack's oldest boy is in Alaska. He an environmentalist. He graduated from Santa Barbara and studies the water and that. And now they are taken the ice water...the frozen ice water and making it into water. Taking the salt out of it and giving all the water to Anchorage. So you see he has a really interesting life. His daughter is in that new computer part of the telephone office and she has a good job in that study. His other boy loves building and he's in the cement work. And cement blocks and things like that. But it's just interesting to be with that and Craig just got a, I don't know what you do call it, but as a Outstanding

Printer of the State of California down at the print shop that he's in. And he got that award and a special dinner the other night for it. The printing company come from back east, from Chicago, came out and bought out the printing company he was with. He's down at Hermosa Beach and he was the only person out of their 26 employees that kept was Craig. So now my Bill, Ted's youngest son is at Schripps. He passed what you had to be a doctor. And he's studying to be a doctor down at Schripps College. And so I have lots to be thankful for.

DODSON: I'm sure you do. Now you mentioned narcotics. In your school days did you know anyone who used anything like that?

CLARK: If we saw anybody drink a glass of beer we thought they were drunk and going to hell. So that was the thing then you know. Kids were kind of rebellious, they'd drink, we were very much, very much against it. If we saw anybody. You know, you just didn't walk down the street. You didn't with them at all. It's just like with Charles Canby now you know that built that beautiful hospital down in Sherman Oaks to take of the cancer people. Well, he operated on me for cancer. I've had five cancer operations. And he did them. And he's retired now but he always says,

"Well Olieta," I would stand by and I went in with the Board of Education and had that breast surgery and they brought in this marine and now he's the head of UCLA. And see the Board of Education demands that you have...you can have your own doctor and three other doctors but they have to have a doctor standing by and I said, "You're not going to touch me." But I had to go see him and he was at the Cancer Clinic on Hope and Los Angeles. Because the Board of Education made me go. Because I was hurt in the school room. I hit a metal table and hit the breast and that caused the cancer and I says, "But you're not going to do it." I says, "I want Charles Canby to operate on me. And he and Leland Wellburn are going to do the operating." And you're not going to touch me Justin Stein." And I said to him like that. And they thought I was sound asleep and Charles later told me, he said, "And Olieta, all of a sudden you got up and you said, Charles, don't you let that Justin Stein touch me, will you?" And they thought they'd already put me out they thought but I hadn't.

DODSON: That's the Dr. Charles Canby who is still alive.

CLARK: Yeah, he's still alive but he's retired. But he always...



DODSON: Now his father was also a physician as I know.

CLARK: My doctor in 1918 and he's the one that told me I couldn't die because they didn't have a coffin for me.

DODSON: Was his name Charles too?

CLARK: Yes, uh-huh. But he...of course my mother was a Registered Nurse and she was taking care of us but that was the '18 Flu and if you know anything about the '18 Flu was that it was just everybody was dying.

DODSON: Yes, I know that there a very high mortality on that.

CLARK: Very terrible. Oh, it was just terrible. Everybody was just burning in fevers and I could hardly walk after I got up. I can remember just staggering to try to walk. We had such fever just burning us up with fever. But I can remember that real plain.

LAWTON: Most of the people because of the lack of medicine that people were so sick?

CLARK: Like and you know all in together and only one doctor to take everybody...you see we only had one doctor in the valley.

DODSON: Well you see, that's also before the anti-biotics.  
If a person went into pneumonia there was no specific  
for it.

CLARK: No, we didn't have...there was nothing to protect us.  
No way to protect you.

DODSON: It use to be Emily, that if you met anyone who had  
pneumonia and was still alive that person was almost  
a curiosity.

CLARK: Right. But it just...you just couldn't understand  
how they lived through it.

DODSON: That's right. Because was no real specific for it,  
for treating it.

CLARK: But Charles always said, it was my mother's good care  
and he said the way she took care of us. She was at  
Loma Linda later and her brother Clinton gave the 10  
acres of ground that the Glendale Sanitarium is built  
on and he came out from, they came from Kansas out  
here and he built Loma Linda. He was the first  
doctor at Loma Linda. Dr. Clinton Burroughs was his  
name. And he always said that it was just mother's  
training with the hot fomentations and the heat and  
the cold to bring down the temperature that she had

been trained at Babcreek, Michigan and she knew how to do all those things. And he said that's the only thing that...because they wasn't anyone...I had just six brothers and myself. And we all had the flu at one time.

DODSON: And you all came through it, didn't you? That was fine because the mortality was pretty high with that.

CLARK: Oh, just terrible. Just everybody...just school kids and everybody was dying. I can just remember it so plain. But when he came in that day, he says, "Well, your awful sick but you can't die. I haven't got any place to put you." Make you sick, I swear it.

DODSON: What would you say was the worse thing that ever happened in the history of the valley? Would you rate that flu?

CLARK: I would say the 1918 Flu took a lot of people but I think the worse thing to ever happen was the floods. The drowning of the...there was just so many that drowned. Even in '43 and '45 they were drowning in this and you see water...I've weighted in water to my waist many a time.

DODSON: Is that right?



LAWTON: You mentioned something back, you said what Whitsett did to us? Was there something with the way he was building or losing water?

CLARK: No, the way it was...he had these 10 acres of oranges and they were on Van Nuys Blvd. and from Vanowen coming down towards Hamlin, you know, and it would be on this side of the street. It's where the Von's store and later Jon's store, it was in there...that's where it was. And the water would come down Kester.

LAWTON: Kester, was the mission.

CLARK: No, it would come clear from San Fernando down. And they call it Mission Hills and it would come down through. Well, then the water came from there and you see then he built this big ditch at Valerio and brought the water over and there is still the ditch, it's still there. He brought it over and sent down Tyrone. And you see we live at the time we lived on Oxnard and that's how we know where this water came from. And my kids, his first wife, and I've known both wives, but his first wife, she was very much against it. But then Ruby Rogers and Edith Munon was...Edith lived on this side of Van Nuys Blvd. and Ruby Rogers' apricot orchard was on that side of

Vanowen and Van Nuys Blvd. And you see when he brought the water down and it came there then it flooded out Mr. Rogers' apricot grove and you see that's why we were afraid we could have bought group going up Van Nuys Blvd. for ten cents a foot.

DODSON: Well, did he dig a ditch to keep the water from his acreage.

CLARK: Yes, of course, he had the money and Mr. Rogers couldn't fight him. Because Mr. Rogers didn't have the money. Nobody could fight Whitsett, Whitsett had the most money. It was the man that had the most money could do what he pleased.

DODSON: I see. Did you ever meet Mr. Whitsett?

CLARK: Oh yes, I knew him well.

DODSON: What sort of a reputation did he have in the valley?

CLARK: Well, he lord over people. You know, "I am Mr. Whitsett." And he gave you that feeling. His wife was very humble. She was a beautiful person. So was his daughter. And then his second wife I knew well too because she belonged to the Women's Club and I

belonged to the Women's Club and I knew her real well. But his first wife, he sure did lord over her. And I was just a young girl going to high school and I could feel this feeling that you know he felt as if he was the big man of Van Nuys. And I guess he was.

DODSON: Well, did you feel that he was rather unpopular with the people of Van Nuys? Would that be your feeling?

CLARK: I don't think I had enough knowledge to realize what he was doing, only we just thought we hated him because of what he was doing to Ruby's folks. There was a hatred towards him.

DODSON: I see.

CLARK: Now, how would you have felt?

DODSON: Well, it's hard to say since of course I had no connection with the valley at that time. Is he usually accredited with the founding of Van Nuys in your opinion. That would that be a fair statement?

CLARK: No, I think more the Mulhollands. And then of course there's Whitmer over in Lankershim. Well, now they call it North Hollywood. We use to call it Lanekrshim.



DODSON: That was 1927 is when they changed the name wasn't it?

CLARK: Yeah.

DODSON: But you feel there were other people that had a great deal to do with the...

CLARK: Oh yeah, I don't feel that Whitsett did it. Or this Ms. Bacon and Mr. James, they owned those grain fields. You see as you went from Balboa going out and then you see Bacon had that, where we use to have the horses would come in and the water...we had a lake way out there. And that would right at the corner of Balboa and Ventura Blvd. and that was the lake. And then we had all these little adobe huts back in here and the stage coach would come in and let these people off and then if they didn't have any place to stay they stayed in those little buildings there.

LAWTON: ? ranch was adobe up on there. Or the Encino is adobe? Is that what that is right there?

DODSON: No, it would be further south is what you talked about, yes.

CLARK: Farther out. And you see that was water right there and of course they would allow us to swim in that. It was too dirty. And see the horses would go there. We had drinking fountains along there and the horses would go there to get their water.

DODSON: Did you happen to know any of the Lankershim family?

CLARK: No, the only ones I knew were Grayhills and then because Mary and then Florence Hill went to North Hollywood High School and they would come up to our dances at night. And of course, I having six brothers, why then there was three of them at that time was old enough to go to the dances and we would go to the dances and they would come up on the street car and my brother would always see that Florence got home because he liked her real well. And he would sure that she got home okay. And then the Friebergs...I don't know whether you'd come in contact with that name or not.

DODSON: No, now that name I don't know.

CLARK: Well the Frieberg's along Chandler Blvd. from let's see that would be going from Ethel down...I'm trying to think of my street down there...well anyways, they owned the peaches along there. They had these big

peach orchards and they would sell...we would go there to buy peaches by the lug and they had the first peach orchards along in there. And you see, Lankershim, that was why they had more peaches. We had more apricots up here but they had more peaches than Lankershim. And the Frieberg's had this great big huge peach orchard and then later when I had the cannery there at Van Nuys in the second war that was in the '40s, Frieberg supplied the majority of our peaches to people that didn't have them and you see the reason they canned at the cannery was because you didn't have the food stamps to get enough can stuff and this way it saved you from having food stamps for your vegetables and your fruit and you could come to the cannery and can it. That's why I had the runs.

DODSON: Oh I see. An individual would bring his own fruit and...

CLARK: They brought their own stuff and then but you see I had to have a license to run that free court. You see all vegetables have to be canned above 242 and we had a clock on the wall and a hand that went around on this clock and as they came around, this would tell you exactly that she did the cook. Then my initials had to go to that and every night it had to be sent to San Francisco for Mr. Vanderhoot to look



at it to see that it was the correct cooking. If for any reason that we would cook anything in our retort. And I had two boys that worked for me and if, ? this girl...and see we put in...we had 24 tables and there would be 14 to a table. And we ran every single day, sometimes on Saturdays and sometimes on Sundays, to get the fruit. Anyways, this desk we would put all the tin cans in when you see then everything was safe because it was in tin cans. But for any reason that my clock, this little hand, he couldn't release...they never could release the cook...we always called it the cook...until I went over and looked at it. And because my initials had to go that that cook was done right.

LAWTON: Was by time or by heat?

CLARK: By time and it was by heat too. But it would have to go for so many minutes and this hand...and the little hand would make a mark around and then it would take it off the face of the clock and then I'd have to send it to San Francisco every night. And it had to go in. And my night cooks, I'd have to check that in the morning. And Viola Johanson run the night shift.

DODSON: And then a person would be issued his canned goods after he brought in a request...

CLARK: They would come in and there would be an office girl and they would go in and then I had a stamp with their number and each person...but they were allowed to can, they had to come and take a course under me and I would have seven and eight hundred people in the auditorium. And they would have to have completed the course before they were allowed to come in and can. And I would give two classes at night after I get through at the cannery during the day and go back to the high school in the auditorium at night and teach this class. I had to teach them about botchalism because they had to know how dangerous it was to cook string beans and that. My brother at that time had come back from the Edison Company, after he'd come back from the war and had the Edison Company. They would not give you a stove and then in the Van Nuys News, they always had big headlines. "What's Canning Today," by Olieta Clark as it written. And it would be if anyone cans string beans or that they will not be able to replace the stove because the stove can blow up. To can corn or string beans you have to put a thermometer down in the middle and it has to reach 242.

DODSON: Those two were especially dangerous, weren't they?

CLARK:

Yeah, the vegetables. Tomatoes have to cook 55 minutes too and people said, "Why not. They are so easy to cook on the stove, I don't know why." And I said, "Because there are so many little worms in the core of a tomato and we had to be sure that they were sterilized in the middle." If you would put this jar, a fruit jar with fruit in your oven and turned your oven on that it would reach 242 in the middle of that jar it would explode. Your oven would explode because it can't reach that. There is never should ever can in the oven, never. Because it does not cook in the middle of the jar. Because the glass jars. So you see we could cook everything in tin cans because we had this big retort to cook it. Well, then the people would come and take my class, then I gave them a certificate that they could come to our cannery. They'd call up and make an appointment with my secretary in the office and print which day and somebody said, "You have to make it a week ahead of time." Because we'd be filled and we just couldn't do it. We had day and night. Lots of times women would work during the day and that's why we had the night class. They would come at night and their husbands would come and help them so they could get through sooner. Well, we had to teach them how but see I'd learned this from the 1918 cannery. Learned how to prepare the food, how to use a pitter



to take the seed out of a cling peach and how to do it with a nectarine. How to make their jams and jellies and all those things to make. Of course, their worse problem was sugar. Because they were only allowed to get...and they would steal sugar from each other and then we had to watch the sugar very careful.

DODSON: I was going to say sugar was rationed wasn't it?

CLARK: Yes, uh-huh. And they were...so I had to teach them to cook with an 1/8 of a cup of sugar to a quart of fruit because that's all we had to do it with. You just didn't get the sugar to do it. And I had people that was really big people in town steal somebody else's sugar. You know you really watched that very very careful. That sugar business was something.

LAWTON: But wasn't the sugar in those days a lot stronger. It's so refined now and it's so...

CLARK: When it's refined it's the same. And there is no difference between beet sugar and cane. I don't care what they tell you, beet sugar and cane sugar is the... We had two big sugar factories that was beet that...cane that comes from Hawaii and the beet factories were here. We had one down by Anaheim and

one down on here at San Pedro. And I've gone through all the sugar factories and there is no difference now then there was then. The extra fine sugar is made for fine baking now and they think it's different. But being a...see I went and took Home Ec because I am a Home Ec teacher and that's why I knew food you know I knew all about sugar and things what to cook with. So, and Donna knew that. Donna Hubbard. I was going to tell you about Mary Jane and I think I got way tracked on that. How Donna would sit in Mary Jane's house...if you ever had got in Mary Jane's house...you come down the hallway and the living room was clear over to the side.

DODSON: I've been there but I don't remember clearly.

CLARK: Well, you come in off that door and then you go down the hallway. And Donna would sit on the davenport in the front room. And the kids would even come clear from Florida when we would have...at every year we always had our school party. And it would be when the...at the end of the year when Donna was out from teaching and she would be there in the front room and she would name every person to comes in by their ? I always thought...of course I'd admired her. And my three sons, they all graduated under her and they all admired her too. She was such a marvelous marvelous

person. No one ever once...my Irish goes straight up...if anybody ever said anything to Donna. Because I knew how beautiful she was and her mother was an old lady and she never would let Donna ever get married. And she would come in a wheelchair and she'd take her and she'd go with Donna all day long. She'd sit in a classroom with her. But I just thought for an interesting life for Donna you know to be able to name every one of us and George Drake, I can remember so well. And she'd say, "Oh, he came from Florida to see us." And she was just such an adorable person it's been wonderful to know her of course I've had an interesting life as you can see. I've been having a busy life.

DODSON: Oh yes. Now you were mentioning the dangers on canning vegetables. How about fruits? Are they as critical as vegetables.

CLARK: No, because there is acid in your fruit. And you see corn and string beans have no acids. Tomatoes, you've got to get all that core out because you've worms in them. And under the microscope there's just millions of little tiny worms in the core of the tomato so always be sure and get all of the core out.

DODSON: You're right. That's something I didn't know.



CLARK: It's just full of little tiny microscopic worms.

LAWTON: My husband has trouble with his stomach and that's now...now I understand why he can't touch tomatoes at all.

CLARK: No, it's the acid. The acid is what's bothering him.

DODSON: Are the worms found only in the core then on the tomato.

CLARK: Just in the core. Uh-huh, they stay in the core. So that's why we had...and we took a peach pitter, a peach pitter takes out the cling peaches. But they have to make it nice and round you know all the way around. So it's just nice. All your canned tomatoes you will see all the core is out. But it's done nice and round. Of course, they do it with machines now...then we did it all by hand. And of course tomato sauce is made out of all the peelings and all the worms and everything. That's what they make tomato sauce out of. ? for days.

DODSON: Well, how about fresh tomatoes? Should a person take out the core?

CLARK: Oh yeah. Boy, if it was me I would get all that core out. Now, the tomato your husband may be able to eat is if you'd plant in your yard. The Italian tomato because that's, I call it our sweet tomato.

LAWTON: But take out the core in those too.

CLARK: Yeah, be sure and get all that core out because they aren't...

LAWTON: Is that just the seed part? Or is it...

CLARK: No, that little white core. You know, that's right in the middle. Some tomatoes have a bigger core than other tomatoes. That's why I always plant the ace tomato in my yard because it doesn't has as big a core in to it. So it's...

DODSON: They were also raising quite a few walnuts in the valley, weren't they?

CLARK: Yes, until we got the worms.

DODSON: Oh, did that destroy the walnuts?

CLARK: Oh yeah, the worms is what...

LAWTON: When did the worms come in?

CLARK: It was the moth and when the moth came and it developed the worms and made the walnuts very wormy and so then they use to fumigate and put the great big candles but it got so expensive, you couldn't afford to fumigate it. I can remember in 1936 when we raised chicken fryers and chicken rabbits and sold them three for a dollar. And I had boysenberries out in the backyard and I'd pick them in a big strawberry box full and I'd get five cents for them. We'd sell a lug of grapes for fifteen cents, a lug of cantaloupes for fifteen cents. The boys farmed everybody's backyard. See our yards went from Victory Blvd. to Gilmore and we owned the two lots and so had a Victory garden back there. And so that's how my boys started in ? farm land. I lived there at 15015 Victory Blvd. and so that's between Kester and Sepulveda and we had our first valley home there after my husband and I were married. And we raised the animals in the back and then one day I came home and Jack had three little sheep in the backyard and I said, "Jack, you can't have that." He says, "But mother I took those two big old piano boxes and I built them all together and nobody'll see them." And I said, "But Jack, they make a noise. And they'll hear them." And I said, "Dr. Wellburn is



back here." Dr. Anderson was our only veterinarian and Marcum, Van Nuys News and his home was there. They all were right in the back of us. And I said, "They will all hear you. You can't." "Ah, mother I'm not going to give up these baby sheep." And you know this son of mine he is a judge and he has horses, sheep, pigs, everything in his backyard now. That's why he's bought 10 acres up by Tahoe up in the mother load country and going up there where he can raise all the animals he wants. He loves his animals and his teaching his baby, nine months old, he puts a rain bonnet over him and it's pouring down rain and takes the baby down to feed the animals. He has a beautiful big place up in Canyon Country now. And a big pasture down in the back. And they did have five horses when all the kids were home but now...

DODSON: We were talking about the walnuts. Have you ever heard of pickling walnuts?

CLARK: Uh-huh.

DODSON: When I first mentioned that to people, they think I'm joking. They think there's no such thing.

CLARK: Of course, it's in your recipe book. You use the vinegar, you boil down your vinegar with your water

and boil it down to a...and you take your walnuts and blanch them to get that skin off and then put them in and put them in the vinegar.

DODSON: Well, that's almost never done at the present time is there. I've never come across such a thing in the store.

CLARK: Well, any more than selling your rattle snakes. Gelson's might carry it. Gelson's really carry the most of odd things you know. But we use to try to get the whole walnut out, you know and get the middle of it out then pickle them whole, round and whole.

DODSON: Well, I first heard of it in regard to one of the members of the Lankershim family. As I understood it, the walnuts were picked from the tree when they were green, before the shell had gotten hard.

CLARK: Before it got hard.

DODSON: And that's when they could pickle them. Was that done very often in the valley? Was that a popular dish at home.

CLARK: No, my mother made hominy and we use to go up to Sylmar. I use to go up in those trees and pick

olives. That was in the fall. You know we would get days off from school when the olives were going to go to waste in Sylmar and we'd climb those ladders and pick the olives and then we'd have to make up our school on another day or take longer into the summer. But of course when there was war, we don't have school a lot. When we had to go up in the canyon. We had to get the fruit in.

DODSON: Would you say that in the interval between the first and second world wars there was much difference in the type of food that people...



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CLARK: I was buying it at the health store.

DODSON: And you probably pay many many more times for it than what it cost then.

CLARK: Yes, they do. You know, just look at hey, look at wood. My son Jack brings the wood back now clear from Stockton where he's in the mother load country, where he bought the 10 acres and he brings the wood down because he buys it for \$40 a cord and it's \$190 a cord right here in the valley. So he brings it down.

DODSON: Emily, I mean to...

CLARK: Well, I was going say I could make some hot chocolate for you. But I'm not a heavy coffee drinker. I'll drink coffee mostly half water and half coffee. But lately I've had the high blood pressure which I always had low blood pressure before and then I went into high blood pressure and of course my cookies and everything is made with no salt in it. I guess as you know there is no salt in it.

LAWTON: This is delicious. I don't eat much salt at home anyway.

CLARK: No, never use salt. Don't use it because it really...

DODSON: A lot of people are the same way about that. I buy the unsalted margarine, non salted peanut butter and that sort of thing.

CLARK: I get mine at the health store.

DODSON: Yeah, we are told that people eat much too much salt.

CLARK: Oh my yes. So I make my bread, my cookies, everything I make I just use salt. Just don't. I have the salt substitute, if somebody comes to the house I put a salt shaker on the table and I say, "I'm sorry there's no salt in anything you're eating, you'll have to salt it yourself." I just don't, you know. So long as they have something you should do, I do.

LAWTON: I have a question. You've watched the valley change and grow and you know you were a young girl when it was just beginning. Do you feel that values and women and you know how they feel about themselves and

that the outside world has changed a lot and if so, how?

CLARK: Oh, I think so. But you know, you kind of have to look things two ways. You can see a woman that's younger than I am...she's got her hair hanging down here and she's dressed with no make-up on and she says, "Well, I have to work so hard." I do lots of hard work. I have all my yard work and berries and boysenberries and raise all my garden food and everything in there but I don't see any reason to use that for an excuse. It's just an excuse because they don't want to...they don't want to take their baths and be clean and do it. And I think you have to have pride and we have just as much pride then and then you find so many now that down the children of today. Of course, I do think dope is a terrible thing. But I thank God that none of my grandchildren have ever been on dope. And I'm very lucky. A very lucky person. I think they get with the wrong things. I'll never forget when Jack was...well, he wasn't more than six years old...and this girl came to my house. And she lit a cigarette. He got a stool and got over in front of her and he sat and he took his little finger and he went like this and he says, "Aren't you ashamed of smoking in my mother's house?" And she looked at him like that and he says, "My



mother doesn't smoke." He says, "My dad does, but my mother don't." Now that was something in that body that and to this day, I've never smoked a cigarette in my life. And he's always so proud to say, look, in an ? voice, "But my mother doesn't do that. My mother don't do this." That don't you think that the women degraded themselves and that have brought on to children. Don't you think this? And there's some families that they raise their children and couldn't care whether their child would ever come home or they ever have a meal or where they go and all they think about is themselves. They don't think of their family. And I think we have just as good of mothers today as we had in my day. In some of grandmother's day and I think we have just as good of children. But anything that really gets my goat is when people start running down children or high school kids. And it's especially, it's the people that's never had children.

LAWTON: Or don't care that much for their own.

CLARK: No, and don't you think children were neglected in those days as much as been neglected today?

LAWTON: Was there as much of that kind of problem then?

CLARK: Well, I don't think we knew about it so much. Now I can remember when Lankershim, where the park was, the Mexicans use to be in there, going down on Riverside and Magnolia in through there. But and I how I got there, I just don't remember whether I walked or how I got over there but I could remember this Mexican woman and she say, "I will give you a tamale if you take care of my baby while I make them." And she had this big rock and she was pounded the meal to make her masa, to make her tamale. And I use to think that smelled so good. And I was quite small then and I would take care of that baby for a half of day to get one little tamale out of her. But I use to fight wherever there is wages. And maybe we didn't have the money at that time to buy because there products cost an awful lot of money.

LAWTON: Every little penny had to go for just to buy things.

CLARK: But don't you think that's where we've come to so much thievery? Don't you feel that way?

DODSON: Yes, it's harder for me to see how a person can spend \$100 a day on narcotics. And I read in the paper that some are spending hundreds of dollars.

CLARK: Without holding up...it's just like my neighbor next door. She went over at 4:00 in the afternoon to Ralph's and there was black man came this way. A black came in and went there and they closed right in on us. And she said, she only had her wallet in her hand and she didn't think she had very much money on her. But she said as they got just about that close to her, a woman came up to her with a station wagon with a big police dog in it and she says, "I will hook my horn and don't give them anything. I'm going to turn my police dog on them." And at that time there was a Thrifty Drug Store, sent out there security guard to see what was going on. And the four men took off and she had said that they didn't see the police dog and her car was down farther and as she tried to put her groceries in the car, they walked to the trunk and started to rob her. And so she called her dog by name and he got up and looked back, and she says, "I'll let my dog loose on you if you don't leave me alone." But she followed up, she was following to try to get somebody to come and help her about it. And here he was and they were closing in and she said, if she'd let the police dog out he would torn them to pieces. But the four of them and we had another one where the woman didn't lock the back of her car. I have an old car but I keep back end locked. And in not locking the back car here was



the man laying there with a knife in the back end of her car. And she went to get in her car and he just reached up with the knife like that to get her purse. Now we didn't have things like that.

DODSON: I was going to ask you about that. Whether you felt the valley was much safer in the past then now. Oh, I don't feel as safe at all right now and I never go out at night. I never go out. My son says, "Mother, if you need anything at night I will come and get you and I will take you." So I never ?

DODSON: Well, that's about what other people have told us that they felt much safer in the past.

CLARK: Well, what do you think the students that you have in classrooms? Can't you see a big change in them?

LAWTON: My mother says she does. She has some little children and she said the change is tremendous. Even over the last ten or fifteen years.

CLARK: Well, with Joyce. Of course, Joyce doesn't believe in having the interpreters in the classroom. She thinks that the children should all have to talk English.

LAWTON: The problem is they don't learn English at home, so they're going to have to learn both languages or have the.

(OVERLAPPING)

CLARK: Ted was over in the Philippines and tried and they see he's with Carnation and he started the General Milk over there and then doing that, going over there, why the children there you have to learn their language. The children had to learn just the Chinese and they called it a lingo, the Filipino lingo. And they had to learn that. And if you sent them to an English speaking school then you had to pay extra for an English school. But you know it was so bad there in '58 the driver...you want to go outside? The driver would come and get the two children by their hands and take them to his bus, walk the dog, take him to school, take to the teacher, take them in the room. The doors was locked and when they got ready to go home the driver came after the children, picked them up, walked home, brought them in of course it was the maids in the house and they would have to be there at the door to get the children. Now that's how and that's the way Ted's three children were raised over in the Philippine Islands. He was over there with Carnation, he's been with Carnation ever since they opened. So this is 1958. So we wonder,

don't we? Don't you wonder in life what's around the corner?

DODSON: Well, I'm not always eager to try to figure it out either.

LAWTON: No, not the way it's been going.

DODSON: What would you regard as probably the worse thing that's ever happened in the valley...in the history of the valley since you've been here? Is there anything you particularly regret about it?

CLARK: No, I think that I've really had a very happy life in the valley. I have oodles and oodles of friends. You know it just makes you very happy to think that these...that you have friends who are...well it's just like to have my kids celebrate my 80th birthday and had a 175 people to it.

DODSON: Well, that was quite a birthday party.

CLARK: Up at Jack's place. My bridesmaid was there and Billie said to people...she says, "Well, Olieta and I have been friends ever since we've been 13 years old. We've never had a cross word between us and we'd raised our families together and when we would sell



our house we'd move in with them. They'd sell their house, they'd move in with us. Lived together for two or three months till we got situated again. And their daughter Jane and she says, "Of course, she's always been my auntie." Billie had a...her husband deserted her when Jane was just quite young and I made all of her clothes for her for her to go to school in because Billie was making just a small wage to try to keep her and her daughter. And we're still just as close as we can be. And we just write eight and nine pages to each other of what's going on. She lives down in Long Beach.

DODSON: Did you know Mary Jane Pettit very well?

CLARK: I knew her through church life. You see she's Presbyterian too. And she was one of the Presbyterians. I had to go down and start the new Presbyterian Church. And I've always known Mary Jane through church. She always lived farther out then I did and so she wasn't with our group. But see, you remember school days was walking days.

DODSON: Yes.

CLARK: And we didn't have cars. We didn't have ways to get around. But Mary Jane and I still remain very close friends.

DODSON: She was or you were a little ahead of her in school, weren't you?

CLARK: I'm one year.

DODSON: Oh, it was that close then. So you were in school at the same time?

CLARK: Oh yeah. Her brother sat in back of me. He was a devil. His name was George.

DODSON: Is that so? You know I've never heard her mention her brother. This is the first time I knew she had one.

CLARK: My hair was below my knees. And my mother wouldn't let me have it cut and of course it was curled. And he put take and put it in the ink well.

LAWTON: Oh, I've heard about that.

DODSON: That was a favorite trick in the old days.

CLARK: Yeah, with the long hair. So finally then we could twist it up and we brought it up like this and made a twist underneath and brought the other hair over the top. And people would say, "What kind of wraps did you put in your hair today?" And I'd say, "There isn't a wrap. It's all my own hair." "I don't believe it." So I'd take out the two hair pins and let my hair fall down. And they said, "Well, we believe it now." But I had this awful long hair.

LAWTON: You know I use to be teased too because I had it down to my waist.

CLARK: Migraine headaches.

LAWTON: They use to have so many different names for it. So I've heard of that but I never heard of anybody who had it down to their...

CLARK: Old George sat behind me. Finally Donna, she says "I won't make you sit beside him any more." I wish Donna was alive, that you could talk to her.

DODSON: We'll have to tell Mrs. Pettit, her brother had quite a bad reputation.

CLARK: Oh she knows that. Yes. That was years...



DODSON: Is he still living? I've never heard her speak of him.

CLARK: Yeah, he's up by San Francisco.

DODSON: Is that right?

CLARK: So is her daughter. Well, this is how well I know her. When she got...when her daughter married the Stewart boy I did all the wedding for them. I did all the decorating for it.

DODSON: Well, did you know Stan Pettit too?

CLARK: I knew Stan after they were married. I didn't know him before.

DODSON: I see. Now he was one of the pioneer aviators here in the valley I understand.

CLARK: With the oodles and oodles of money. They've always had a lot you know. They own that gas station right over you know on the corner of Victory and Balboa on that corner, that Standard gas station in there. And then their property use to run all the way down. Of course I've known them for so many years and they have always been a good giver in the church. They

always lived a good life. Mary Jane has always been a wonderful person. She's not as much garden-minded as I am you know. But she's always kept her place nice and she has a few things and she comes to some of our flower arranging shows. And they've travelled a lot together and then she's had...and then Pat has owned half of Ventura. Stan ?

DODSON: Stan also owned quite a bit of what's now the Sepulveda Wash, or the Sepulveda Basin.

CLARK: Yeah. And I don't know whether he bought that from Pat Owens or not. Because Pat Owens family that was all the apricot orchard and then I imagine he came into it later. This is like Vanoni. He told John on Magnolia, he says, "Those lots...any lot along there you can buy them for \$600. You ought to buy them, John." That was my husband John. John says, "Where would I get \$600?" But he says, "Some day they're going to be worth money." Well, look what they're worth now. Of course, Vanoni's, own clear from Riverside Drive down to Ventura Blvd. all on this side and Mrs. Vanoni she could...have alfalfa and they have fruit and she could take a bale of alfalfa and just pick up like that and throw it in your wagon.

DODSON: Is that right?

CLARK: Yes. But Rosey passed away. The last I heard her husband, they moved to Whittier and of course we always, every two weeks we had to go see Rosey and I was married and she loved my three little boys. And she had two little girls. And then of course Rosey would always come call on me whenever she'd come in town, same with Hilda. When Hilda passed away, this was Hilda Chalkey, and every time I go down there too where the college is, I can see the dairy there and of course Hilda died. She died of hardening of the arteries, turned to stone. And in 1937.

DODSON: We were talking about the changes. What do you think about fashions at the present time? Do you approve of the way people dress?

CLARK: I think that's up to an individual. I think we want to wear...you know it use to be one time you had to have a dress and had to have a hat and gloves to go to church. And now they go, some of the kids, in just anything they want to. If I want to go to church in a dress I go. If I want to go in a pair of slacks or a pant suit. And I think...I don't approve and we didn't in our day of the tiny bikinis about this big or a little strap on the ocean. I don't



think that they should ever go in nude. They do it but I think we have to change with our children. I think that's why with my grandchildren, they all love to come see me...it's because I change the mode of their live as their living today.

DODSON: Well, do you think that the life of women is much freer now of girls than it was in your day or when you were young?

CLARK: Yes, I do. I think we were stricter, we had a much stricter life.

DODSON: Well, which do you think is the best? If you were doing it over, would you stay with the generation you grew up with or just...?

CLARK: No, I was a very strict mother. I know I was strict. And my little boy Ted, when he was young and he was only three years old and they use to tease him. He'd say, "What does mamma say? Well, mamma says it, and you don't it. You ought to look out because you're going to get it." He knew he would be punished if he didn't mind. I don't believe in the children today not being made to mind.

LAWTON: I know, it's a lot of them. None, some of them. ?

CLARK: Look, go to the grocery store. Kids run like crazy. They get into everything. They open up packages. They just do anything they want to do.

DODSON: Do you feel there's much more vandalism and it was then?

CLARK: I think parents don't know where their children are and they don't pay any attention to where their children are.

DODSON: Now we get a lot of graffiti, that is marking on walls and all that. Did that exist to?

CLARK: No, no we'd be scared to do that. And I think religion brought back in schools, I don't think it hurts one bit I believe. Of course, this woman that...she's at it again now. Trying to take religion out of the school. But I don't...I can still see Professor Smith and we looked up to with. Not like you would look up to a God or anything like that but when he opened that drape and walked in, we all stood up. Everybody stood up.

LAWTON: Is that the principal.

DODSON: He was principal of the high school, wasn't he?

CLARK: Van Nuys High School. And I think he'd been principal since 1915, if I remember right tonight, it was about 1920's. When did Allen take over? See then, now I got married and lived in the south west end of town and then we moved back on Victory Blvd. And of course at once I went to see Donna. So anyways, she made principal and he left the school in between those times.

DODSON: Now, you mentioned prior I think that he would open the assembly with prayer.

CLARK: Always, always.

DODSON: Now at the present time, I think that would be forbidden.

CLARK: Oh my, I should say they would. They wouldn't allow it at all. And I can't see any reason not to have it. I don't...there's the Jewish people, there's the Catholic people. We all, we'd meet for Christian endeavor, we didn't ask what religion you were. We just all met to have a good time.

DODSON: Well prayers have been devised in such a way that they don't come across whether a person is Protestant or Catholic or Jewish.



LAWTON: No.

DODSON: You're speaking to God regardless and it's the same God for all of them.

CLARK: That's right and then why should...

DODSON: But the courts will not permit that.

CLARK: Well, it's the Supreme Court. And then it's above them.

DODSON: Do you feel that the children paid attention to the prayer, that they were respectful and all that?

CLARK: We knew the Lord's Prayer in school and we said the Lord's Prayer in school. And you know of course we looked up to Professor Smith, and when you saw him you didn't cringe, you knew he was a good friend. You knew that he was good and I always felt he was very good because...and I can still see us standing up and singing "Onward Christian Soldiers".

DODSON: Now of course at the present time we get in some parts of the city at least, a great deal of disorder in the school. In fact, it's possibly dangerous in

some areas for the teacher to be in the classroom.  
Would anything like that exist in your time?

CLARK: No, never. We row by row, 9th grade would go out first and 10th grade and juniors and the seniors. And your teacher, your homeroom teacher sat on the end and all the students sat down. She would stand and wait until every student was out. Nobody ever pushed anybody, nobody ever shoved anybody when we went to our classrooms. You just didn't do things like that in school.

LAWTON: Do you think that respect for another human being and for adults and people in general is taught more like at home or in school or both when you remember it?

CLARK: More than, I think that this is your school and this is your church and you looked up to it. Nowadays, they couldn't care less. Of course, we have lots and lots and lots of good children in our Sunday schools, lots of them. Many, many good children that I feel our... And don't you see them in everyday life? Don't you see a lot of it?

LAWTON: There are a few of them around but, you know, you got to weed them out. And it's harder to weed them out these days.

CLARK: Of course ? and I've always...well I have been a Presbyterian for over 60 years. So you know that it's good and everybody went to the Methodist and then later Duncan Parkinson, who was a Scottish Minister had the Van Nuys church and that was after we married and then we went to... and I can't remember the Presbyterian as a young...being there...it could have been there. But everybody went to the Methodist Church because we had the Christian Endeavor at the Methodist Church at night. I was to attend Mrs. Mallet's 90th birthday the other day and she's going strong yet.

DODSON: Now you mentioned the Christian Endeavor, could tell us just what you do or did at those meetings?

CLARK: At the Christian Endeavor meetings? Well you go and we would always have three or four songs. We'd have our prayers and then we would have the prayer group and each one would say something that they wanted to pray about. As we would stand up, and we always joined hands together and sit around in a circle. And if we had a friend that was sick, we always told about it. And some times we had refreshments and sometimes we didn't. But we always met and it was just. Oh we discussed school. We discussed work we



wanted to do and later that would be afternoons and we always had a lesson of the bible.

DODSON: Were there any social activities connected to that?

CLARK: Oh yes, we would have...of course the Methodist didn't believe in dancing, the Presbyterians did. But the Presbyterians didn't believe in dancing. So we would have different kinds of games that we could play and meet and just talk and just had a good time together.

DODSON: The Presbyterians were the ones that didn't believe in dancing?

CLARK: No, Methodists didn't. Presbyterians did. And that's why we always said if you join the Presbyterian Church you're going straight to hell because you don't dance.

DODSON: I see.

CLARK: And I had a peculiar life. My mother was Seventh Day Adventist and my father was Catholic.

DODSON: So you became a Presbyterian.

CLARK:

I went to church on Sunday with my father. Saturday with my mother and my uncles would all come and say, "Why don't join church?" And I said, "No, I'll never join church as long as this divided line in the family. I don't see that." Because children don't know what they are. And I says, "When I get married I and my husband have to join the same church." And we had decided to get married I says, "But you're Lutheran. We're going to go to the closest church in our neighborhood, whatever church it is. And we will go there and our children that we have are going to be raised the same church. You have to go to church, I'm going to church. We're going together with the family." And the closest church was on Florence Avenue, the United Presbyterian Church on Vermont Avenue and 75th and that's where we started going to church. Later we sold that church and moved over on Normandie and built the Normandie Church. I met a black woman at the Presbyterian Church about two years ago and she said she had just moved from the south west end of town. And I said, "Did you attend a Presbyterian Church?" And she said, "Yes." And I said, "The Florence Avenue Presbyterian Church?" And she said she sure did. And she said it was all black now. And I said, "I was one of the forerunners of that church." It was quite interesting. She teaches speech here in the valley to children that are having

speech problems. It was quite interesting. After all these many years, you know. 60 years is a long time to belong to that church.

DODSON: Are many of the descendants of some the early pioneer families still living in the valley would you say?

CLARK: There's a few. Mulholland, now Mary Jane and I...there's a few out here at this Chatsworth but I don't know the Chatsworth people very well. They're kind of...there is a group and they all just seem to stay in a ball together and I've gone to the Chatsworth to start meeting but I don't ever feel like I do in Van Nuys.

DODSON: Is that right? It's more of a closed community.

CLARK: Very closed, very very closed. And they greet each other and talk to each other and have a good time but they don't seem to...you can go as a stranger and there's never an "Hello," "How are you?" or anything. And you just feel like your a fifth wheel or a sore thumb, I don't know what you would call it but you just don't...there isn't a companionship that we've always had at Van Nuys. And I was growing up with them and I can't remember all the people that I use drive quite often down to their meeting. Everybody,



it doesn't matter, if you were sitting next to me and I didn't know you I'd tell you my name and you'd tell me yours and we would talk but you don't do that out here. They don't feel to be a one bit friendly and even when...for instance he'll look at you to...well, you've kind of been looked over like that. And never say hello to you or anything so you don't go back.

DODSON: Well, that's too bad. Of course, in our case, we welcome everybody to our Museum Association. We try to get people to come. The exact opposite. And we introduce everybody at every meeting.

CLARK: Well, it just, the whole group just seems very very cold. You don't have any desire to go back.

DODSON: I see. Have you ever met Mrs. Elva Marine of the San Fernando Valley District Society?

CLARK: No, I haven't met her.

DODSON: I don't know that she is a pioneer herself. But she's quite an expert on the history of the valley.

CLARK: Well, you know, you could just go on...remember the old Obigian that use to be down on the corner? On the corner of Kester and later they moved, they built

an apartment down here but her son was an attorney and when my son had passed the bar, Jack use to mow their lawn for fifteen cents. That great big huge lawn and so Jack beat him in court. He would go down and Jack was with my brother and my brother is an attorney in Los Angeles and Jack was with my brother when he first got out of law school. So he beat Obigian in court and Obigian come up me and say, "Jackie, you use to...."

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